



FIRST THINGS FIRST

Assistant Director, Government Relations

First Things First (AZ Early Childhood Development and Health Board), is a state agency that exists to increase the quality of, and access to, the early childhood development and health system that ensures a child entering school comes healthy and ready to succeed. Passed by voter initiative in 2006, First Things First is funded through a tax on tobacco products. Governed by a state board and thirty one Regional Partnership Councils, First Things First is a decentralized organization that engages diverse constituencies to accomplish its mission. Organizational values include a focus on accountability, transparency, coordination, collaboration and on the outcomes that will ensure young children start kindergarten ready for school and life.

Job Summary:

Working in close coordination with the Executive Director, the Assistant Director for Government Relations initiates, responds to and coordinates contact between FTF and elected officials at the federal, state and local levels. The successful candidate is responsible for the development and recommendation of policies involving legislation related to early childhood development and health and provides timely assessment of federal, state and local initiatives that have or could have a direct impact on FTF and broader early childhood issues.

The successful candidate works closely with our staff, state board, local council members and stakeholders in order to promote sound policies and an understanding of these policies in the communities FTF serves.

Distinguishing Characteristics:

The ideal candidate enthusiastically supports the vision and mission of First Things First; and possess the personal qualities of integrity and credibility. She/he will have the proven ability to translate complex issues and systems into clear, concise, and engaging documents and presentations. This work involves problem solving and mediating conflicting and unexpected issues among multiple groups and constituencies.

Typical Duties and Responsibilities:

- Contribute to the strategic and operational planning of the organization.
- Serve as member of Executive Director's senior leadership team.
- Interface with state board on a variety of government relations topics.
- Assume active role in problem solving in a complex political environment.
- Establish strategy and direct the analysis of legislation.
- Coordinate with Communications Director to identify and implement a strategic, coordinated public affairs plan that includes statewide and community-based strategies.
- Create a variety of documents to translate legislative issues (i.e., position and briefing papers).

- Provide timely and accurate information (in writing and through public presentations) to regional partnership council members and stakeholders.
- Prepare testimony and testify on behalf of organization.
- Monitor and track federal, state and local legislation impacting early care and education.
- Develop and maintain relationships with elected officials and their staff.
- Oversee relationships with government relations contractors and vendors.
- Promote First Things First and Arizona early education system at the federal level.
- Work closely with Deputy Director for policy and program and other state agencies to attract additional federal funds for early care and education in Arizona.

Qualifications, Knowledge and Abilities:

- Bachelor's degree in political science, public administration, public policy, communications or related field
- Excellent communications skills, including writing, verbal/presentation skills and electronic communications
- Ability to translate complex issues and systems into clear, concise, and engaging presentations and materials for a variety of audiences
- Work independently with great initiative
- Strong relationships with elected officials and community leaders
- Five to 10 years of direct experience in government relations
- Demonstrated knowledge of current trends in communicating with public policymakers and constituents, including social media.
- Ability to work in fast-paced environment, balancing multiple priorities
- Team player
- Knowledge of early childhood and/or education policy preferred
- Stay current with all applicable laws and regulations

Review of resumes will begin on Monday, December 27, 2010 and continue until the position is filled. For consideration please submit your cover letter, comprehensive resume and three professional references by the close of business on Thursday, December 23, 2010 to:

www.azstatejobs.gov

In the AZ State Personnel System, the position is classified as a Grade 25, with a salary range of \$55,202.99 - \$94,762.51. The position is not covered under the State of Arizona Merit system rules. The State of Arizona offers an outstanding comprehensive benefits package.